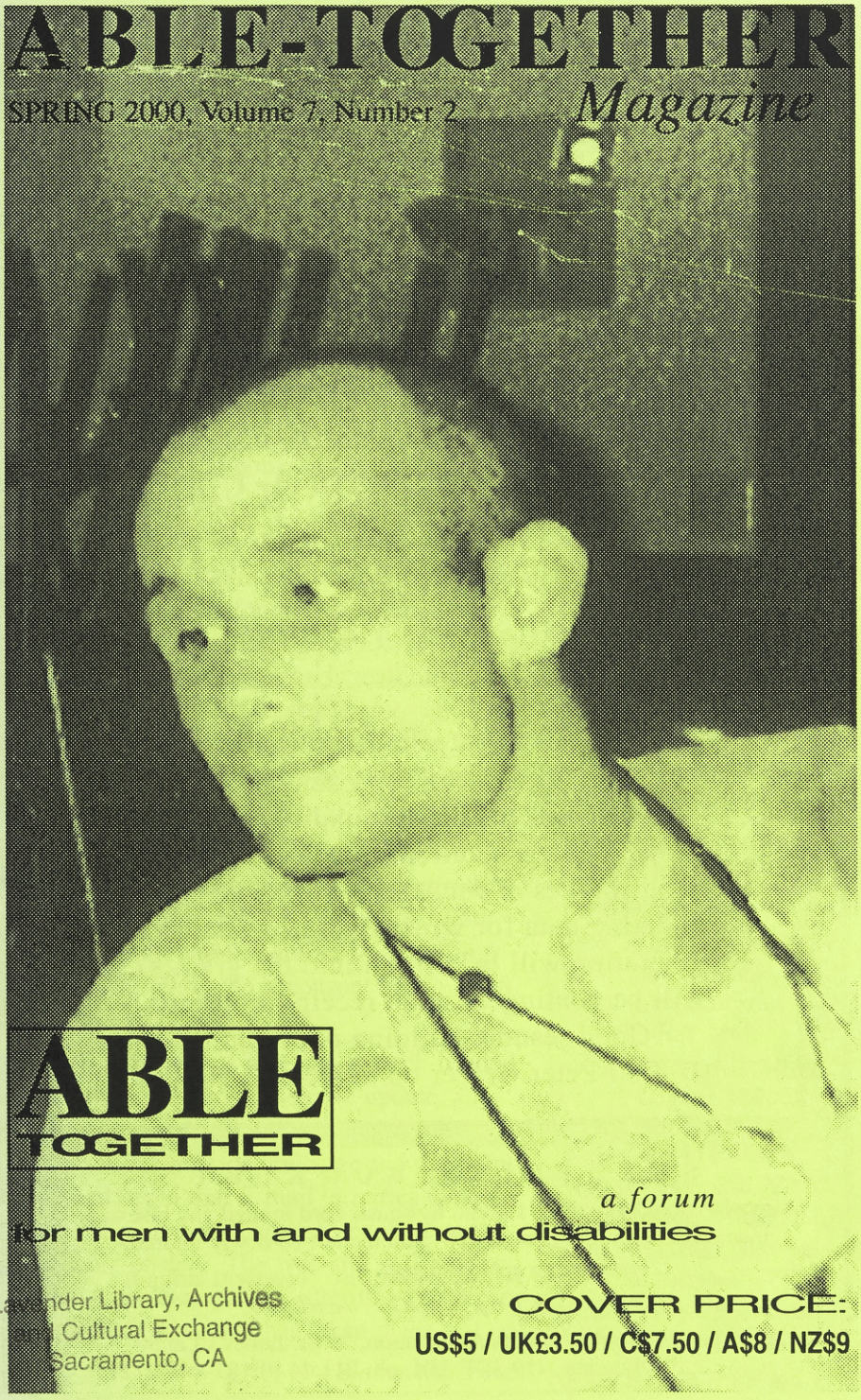
ABLE-TOGETHER *Magazine*

SPRING 2000, Volume 7, Number 2



ABLE TOGETHER

a forum

for men with and without disabilities

Lavender Library, Archives and Cultural Exchange Sacramento, CA

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Cover photograph: A-T's Blaine Waterman—see feature, page 6

BOARD UPDATE
FROM THE PRESIDENT

The board of *ABLE-TOGETHER, Inc.* held its quarterly meeting on March 12th.

News of Chris Hewitt's resignation for personal reasons was received with regret. The remaining board decided to assume his responsibilities for Cafe A-T 2000 San Francisco, pending finding a replacement program head. Board members will rotate as Cafe host, and will recruit a guest co-host for each event.

Inquiries continue to come in from men asking for a CafeA-T in their city: can New York be far behind London?

Disgaytalk, A-T's online discussion group, has had a successfull start to the year, thanks to a wonderful guest moderator, and to a terrific new moderator *pro tem,* who is really liking the job. The board discussed appropriate guidelines for list members and decided that in certain circumstances a person's list membership should be terminated.

The meeting reviewed new inquiries to the Buddy Program, and decided the program should be offered only to men who supply A-T with a telephone number and mailing address, and who sign a consent form. Draft forms were reviewed.

The A-T web site has received a much-needed and delayed, but comprehensive update, and now boasts more than a dozen pages fully detailing A-T's mission, message and programs. The board heard that E-mail inquiries to A-T have increased significantly since the new pages were posted. The web site will next be updated—professionally—after the transfer to **www.abletogether.org** has taken place.

—Blaine Waterman

ABLE TOGETHER

SPRING 2000, Volume 7, Number 2

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ABLE TOGETHER

from the EDITOR

I CAN'T BELIEVE how quickly the time has passed since the last issue, and here I am, wondering what I could or should write about. I saw a lot of discussion on *Disgaytalk* about the Super Bowl Sunday Christopher Reeves commercial —the one where, through some snazzy computer animation, he gets out of his wheelchair and walks. Some thought it painted a distorted, almost dishonest picture, feeling it made it seem like the technology was here today and with these strides in science that there is no reason for there to be disabled people out there. But I have to say, the commercial did make it quite clear that this was years in the future—I guess it's all a matter of interpretation or what one chooses to believe. (Remember the *War of the Worlds* radio scare? I mean, I wasn't around when it was first broadcast but they did interrupt for commercials and station identification and disclaimers of—"This is the Lux Theater presentation of H.G. Wells' *War of the Worlds*"—yet people still went ballistic and believed it was a REAL INVASION! Run to the root cellar, mother!)

Some comments were that the Reeves commercial just seemed creepy—and I have to go along with that. I mean, it was kind of cool but there was just something weird about the whole set-up, and it didn't look overly believable or realistic. But then, I was kind of creeped out by the dancing baby when it first popped up on the internet, maybe it just reminded me too much of that.

There have been many other *Disgaytalk* discussions: things like needing assistance and not being able to get it, trying to make ends meet on a fixed income, trying to find home care aides with little or no funding, problems traveling… like the Battery Bunny, the list just keeps going and going and going.

This issue is a bit more of a hodgepodge (sorry, no pages long article on my personal angst and trauma this time around). We have a book review written by our own Peter Geiger on "When It's Time To Leave Your Lover," a reprint of an article written by Blaine Waterman on buying sex (or love) from hustlers, a summary of a pamphlet sent into us on the dos and don'ts of

assisting persons with disabilities, and an excerpt from a book written by Walt Dudley Itrich due for publication this summer.

One discussion I would like to open up (for use in a future article) is on what happens when one is in a relationship with a disabled person—does it change from being supportive and caring to controlling and commanding? The "Baby Jane Syndrome..."

A friend of mine, wheelchair bound, sent me a letter, all excited about this great guy he had met on the Internet. They met one time face to face and "clicked," two weeks later he had moved in with my friend.

Red Flags and Alarms!!!! All I could think was this clown would change my friend's locks and help himself to the bank account, while my friend lay bound and helpless on the bed, whimpering for a little water to wet his parched and cracked lips. (Can't you just picture Joan Crawford at this point???)

Well, it's a year or so later and my friend is still living with this clown, and I still have bad feelings that maybe he's being used, but he is an adult and can make up his own mind. I can't help but wonder, though—when other (able-bodied) friends shacked up with someone after one or two "trick" dates it didn't seem quite so ominous. Am I discriminating against my friend and his romance just because he is disabled? Do I automatically assume he needs protecting just because he is disabled?

Whoa—real deep, huh?

—Bret Throckmorton

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HUSTLERS: A BUYER'S GUIDE

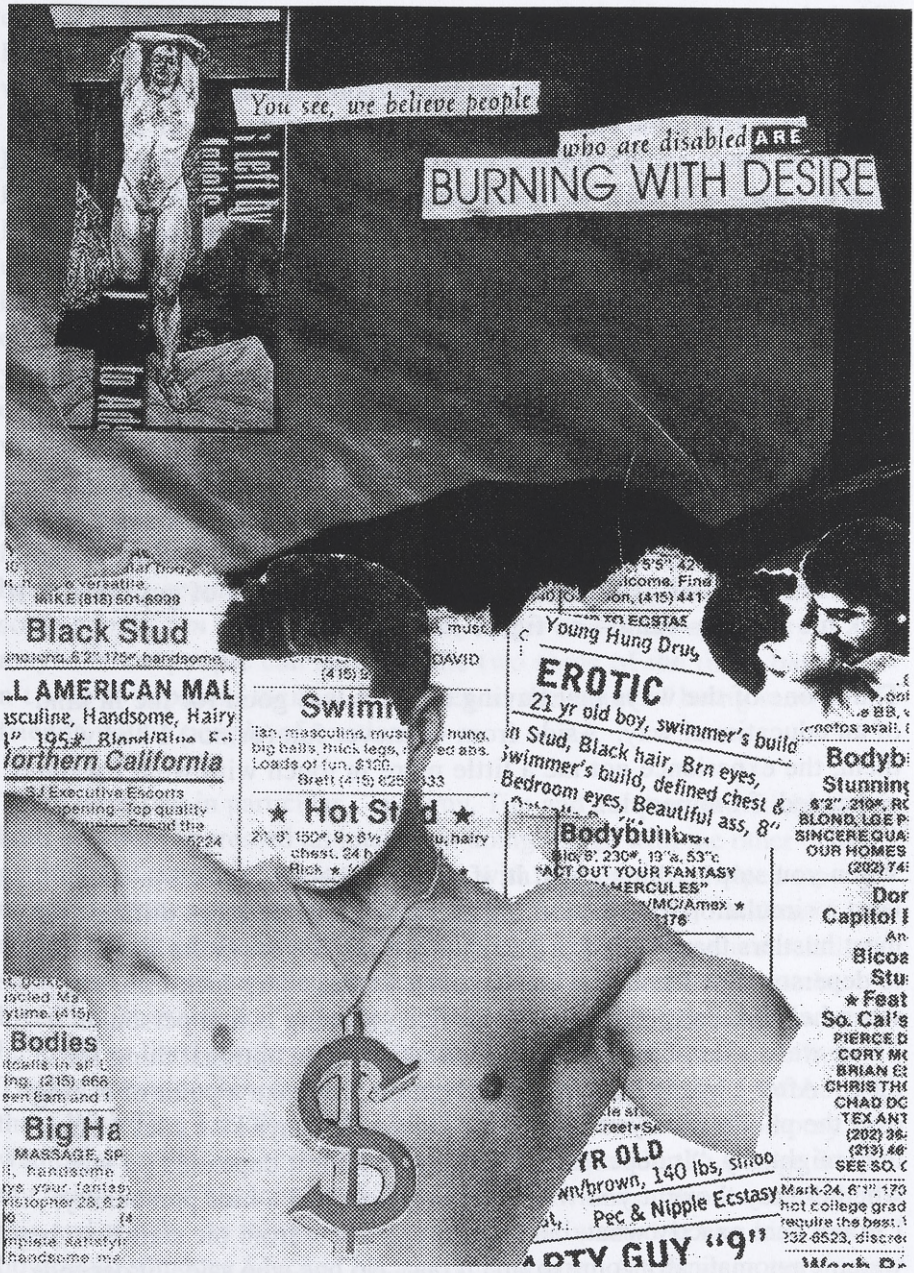
by Blaine Waterman

Throughout my twenties I didn't have an awful lot of luck with sex. I was horny all the time; I thought about calling a hustler, but the idea made me real nervous. Not out of a sense that it was wrong or bad, I just had a lot of anxiety about exactly what the interaction would be like, what kind of person would show up at my door if I called. So I didn't explore it until late in 1994, when I was thirty years old. I had a boyfriend then, but the sexual relationship was kind of not there; we were still warm and friendly, but sexually, for whatever reason, it was going nowhere. I just decided I wanted sex, specifically with younger, cute guys, the kind of guys I'd never had success attracting on my own.

So...I started to call hustlers, mostly from ads in the *Bay Area Reporter,* because they publish photos there and people seemed pretty accessible and it was easy to find lots of choices. The first several experiences I had were really not very good. Not in the sense of people being malicious or trying to rob me or anything like that; they just weren't satisfying.

The first guy I called was nice enough, but just not my type. It was awkward. He actually showed up when Greg, one of my helpers, was on his way out. I told Greg, "Oh, yeah, I called up this hustler, he's gonna come over," and Greg, who's straight, thought it was pretty funny. So this guy comes in, he was like "Tenderloiny," his hair was a real fake blond. He was not horribly unattractive or anything, but I just wasn't that into him. And *he* obviously was not that into doing anything. I found later that some of the guys are pretty horny themselves and seem to like the sex as much as the money. But he was not in that club. He was obviously into delivering as little as possible for the money. So what I ended up doing was having him give me a bath—we didn't have sex at all! He gave me a bath and I talked to him about being a hustler.

My second experience was on a trip with a friend to LA. I was looking in *Frontiers* and saw an ad for a guy named Troy Steel. My friend said,



Burning with Desire ***Bob Guter***

"Yeah, he's got a really great body. Call him up." So I did. He was a nice guy and I was pretty attracted to him, a lot more than the first guy, but he was not into affection at all, not into kissing, only sucking and fucking. I think I gave Troy a blowjob and he gave me a blowjob, and we hung around his house and he showed me some of his glossies (he was some kind of minor porn star), he signed one of the glossies—I've shown it to a lot of people. So in some ways that was one of my more fun experiences—although he wasn't all that affectionate, like kissy-face, and I didn't come or anything. But it was fun because it was the Hollywood thing and he was sort of a character. I mean he was a nice guy. He wasn't a mean person or anything. I think he had drawn a line for himself that he wasn't going to cross and kissing, for him, was on the other side of the line...

Although I didn't fully realize it at the time, I don't have any fun unless there's some expression of affection, unless there's some kind of huggy-kissy action. If all they want to do is get it over with—for me it doesn't work, although I know that's what a lot of guys want. It took me a while—duh!—to figure that out for myself.

That's one of the ways that buying hustlers was good for me in kind of an educational way. Aside from whatever fun (or not) I had with them, the experience got me a little more in touch with what I wanted, or needed, from people.

When you stop to think about it, if you're expecting affection, or at least a simulation of affection, I guess that might be more difficult for most hustlers than the old in-and-out. I think it's easier for the hustler to depersonalize hustling when he's just letting a guy fuck him, say, when he's basically just being an orifice. Kissing is real personal. There were a lot of hustlers who made kissing an optional thing for them. After I learned that's what I wanted, I'd make a point of asking over the phone, "Do you kiss?" or, "Do you let guys kiss you?" And they might say, "It depends." And I guess what it depended on was whether they thought you were fairly cute, or had a nice personality, I'm not sure exactly what, but at least you knew from the start that they weren't automatically going to rule it out. No one who said, "It depends," ever turned me down for kissing, which, of course, felt good. But it took me several encounters before I realized that I had to ask for what I wanted, or I was going to end up feeling, like, bitter and frustrated. One kid, whose hustling name was Zack, I ended up calling a bunch

of times. He was really cute, at least I thought so: short blond hair, lots of tattoos and piercings. Maybe the best thing about him, though, was that he loved to kiss; that was his favorite thing to do.

Expectations are the thing. I mean, if a hustler was very cute and very friendly with me, I was disappointed if he didn't get off. After a while I began to add up my expectations and realized what was making me unhappy about hiring hustlers was that *I wanted a boyfriend.* And a hustler is *never* a boyfriend, simple as that. No matter how sweet, or cute, or nice he is, he's not your boyfriend. He's providing a service you're paying for—which is something you might want to forget. Part of the reason I wanted a hustler to come if I really was attracted to him was so that I could tell myself he was enjoying it as much as I was.

I don't regret seeing hustlers, but I think it took me a year or more to figure out what my real feelings were. The bottom line is, I hadn't been able to separate the desire for love from being horny, and I think some people *can* separate them. Maybe the line is always blurry, maybe some people can separate the two some of the time, but I wasn't able to separate them at all. Even to the point of being semi-friends with a couple of hustlers.

There were two in particular. This guy, Tim and another guy, Richard—both of whom expressed an interest in doing things with me other than getting paid for sex. I went to a movie with Tim once, he helped me move from one apartment to another, so we were friendly, but then it ended, I think partly because of the tensions in the hustler-client relationship. Just as with the client there's the tension between wanting to be loved but knowing you're just paying for sex, with hustlers, some want to be loved or liked for themselves, apart from their sexual marketability. There's some touchiness there if they feel there's any confusion about that. With Tim, I really did like him as a person, but I was also horny and wanted sex with him. I think he wanted our relationship to change from my being one of his Johns to being one of his friends. But I wanted to mix and match. As things developed, I guess I wanted to turn him into a boyfriend, someone I fucked because I liked him. Although he never said so, I'm convinced now that he found that disturbing, confusing.

With the second guy, Richard, a similar thing happened, although I never did as much with him. Richard also showed interest in liking me

Bought Kisses **Bob Guter**

Blaine Waterman, A-T's board president, has a disability similar to cp; a librarian living in Berkeley, California, he is now dating someone. **Hustlers** ***was premiered in the Winter 1998 issue of A-T Magazine.***

apart from being paid. Then I called him once when I was really horny and wanted to have sex, and he said, "Well, I really need money," so I said, "OK, just come over and I'll pay you because I like you a whole lot." So he came and saw me as a client. That seemed alright at the time, but our friendship never really went anywhere after that.

One other thing I learned to do was mention being disabled when I called a guy for the first time. Nobody seemed to have a problem with it. One thing surprised me: I expected it to be a fairly common experience—I mean for hustlers to deal with disabled clients—but I found out it was not. I knew that a lot of hustlers see older guys (although I learned that the client range is a lot wider than I thought), but very few had had a disabled client. A couple of times it was a problem, and then it was very awkward. I had this one real young Asian guy, maybe nineteen or twenty, come over, one of the most attractive hustlers I ever met, and *boy* did he need therapy. He'd had a cousin who died of Muscular Dystrophy. Even though I don't have that, I reminded him of his cousin. He was also one of the few hustlers I met who was up front in his ambivalence about what he was doing. We ended up not having sex. In fact I guess I played therapist. That was one of the few times I regretted the whole thing, even though I felt sorry for him. Later I felt like a fool. I mean, I ended up paying him $120; he should have paid me!

I'm still curious that none of my hustlers had any other disabled clients. Maybe I've overestimated the need that disabled gay men might have to hire hustlers. Maybe it's not as common an impulse as I thought. But I know there's a lot of social isolation among disabled gay men, a lot of us aren't out mixing. Maybe some guys don't do it just because, even though you're paying for it, it does take a certain boldness. After all, I was afraid to pick up the phone for ten years. Another factor is money. A lot of seriously disabled guys are on SSI and let's face it, buying a hustler is not like buying a six-pack; low-income guys don't have the means to buy luxury items like a $100 whore. One of the many reasons I cut down and then gave up on hustlers was the money. I'm employed, but the cost adds up. For a while I was using guys twice a month.

But my other reasons are probably more important. Not only is there the embarrassment, there's also the fear. How do you know what kind of person you're inviting into your house? I guess I've been lucky. Apart from some guys not performing very well—the limp dick problem—I've never

been ripped off and I've certainly never run into someone I was afraid of. You've also got to remember that simply because you're paying for it doesn't mean that things are going to go the way you want them to. Just handing the guy money does not guarantee anything. You may think that in a sense you're buying a commodity, but it's not a dish detergent. There's only so much you can buy of another person, and then the human element overtakes everything else. In that way buying the services of a hustler isn't any different from hiring the services of a masseur or a doctor. Or a lawyer. If the client and the lawyer don't have at least some minimal degree of human compatibility, it's not going to be very satisfactory.

Another thing I learned about hustlers was that they weren't very together people—big surprise! There was lots of drug use, lots of abandonment by families; there was always drama in the background, lots of drama. The one boy, Tim, who I became sort of friends with, claimed he had none of those things, and that seemed to be the case. He was bright, he was employed, he was good-looking, but he seemed pretty lonely. That's pretty sad and disturbing. Here's somebody I'm hiring for sex, somebody who looks to me like he's "got everything"—and it turns out he's no happier or better adjusted than I am.

The other danger is the danger of disease or infection of some kind, even if you're doing your best to play safe. The worst thing that happened to me was scabies and yes, it's as bad as people say it is. No—it's worse! It's a nightmare. On an even more serious level, I pretty much always had condoms ready to use. There was one guy, though, who was not very concerned about safe sex. He wanted me to fuck him without a condom. And I went along with it for a few minutes. But then we weren't connecting very well and I stopped. In retrospect I can't believe I did it. I'm not a dummy. I know all about safe sex. I got tested a couple of times afterwards and never did anything like it again, but it was a disturbing episode. The point is even if you're well-informed, it's easy to be stupid when you're horny, lonely, and with someone you want to like you. This boy was really cute and within seconds my resolve crumbled.

When I first started buying sex I was really curious about prostitution, but when I think about it now, I think my hustler days are probably over, because, like I said earlier, I discovered that hustlers can't deliver what I'm after. Over a period of eighteen months—and about twenty guys—I learned a lot about it. And I learned a lot about myself in the process.

The Wanderer

a preview of Chapter 9 from **Walt Dudley Itrich**'s book:

I've Fallen And I Still Can't Get Up: 16 Americans, 16 Disabilities, One Final Barrier

WYNN SPENT MOST OF HIS TIME during daylight hours high in the hills of Los Angeles' Griffith Park, a mountainous four-thousand acre spread in the center of Southern California's best-known metropolis. Disheveled and sporting long-hair, the gentle six-foot-six man endeavored to keep away from people, whether cops, drug pushers, weekend hikers, gangs, or merely families heading for LA's famed zoo. Usually, it was after dark that he came down from his hiding places to rifle through garbage dumpsters looking for food—usually.

One sunny day, almost without realizing, Wynn wandered down into the heart of the city. When confronted by police, the disoriented young man could not tell them which city he was in. The officers took him to a private outpatient clinic, then arranged for him to enter a full-care program—day care and therapy during the day and a secured residential facility at night.

This was not Wynn's first trip out wandering; he hadn't functioned well mentally or emotionally since he was a tyke. In his mid twenties, Wynn would eventually be labeled by psychotherapists and psychiatrists as having "Borderline Personality Disorder." To become fairly acquainted with this young man, a little book learnin' about BPD is warranted:

The phrase Borderline Personality Disorder has been used perhaps because specialists previously thought the condition lay somewhere on the "border" between neurotic and psychotic disorders, such as borderline schizophrenia. Since BPD is assumed not to be biological in nature, many psychoexperts believe that the source is environmental conditioning—for example, gross abuse commonly occurring in childhood.

Who, What, When, Where, Why?

Estimates show that roughly 2 percent of the population could qualify

for the diagnosis of BPD. In clinical situations, about 8 percent of outpatients and 15 percent of inpatients have BPD, three-quarters of whom are women.

There are substantial co-occurrences of BPD with other personality disorders, specifically excessive emotionality and attention seeking, radical dependency, that is excessive submission, and antisocial behavior like aggressiveness, impulsiveness, lying, and otherwise not conforming to social norms.

One odd component of BPD is that the person is not out of touch with reality. He is cognizant, but may be caught within any or all of the above disorder characteristics—in other words, trapped in disorganization.

In short, Wynn was lost, not only physically, but emotionally and mentally, and deeply afraid—an oversimplified definition, but nonetheless accurate. As with most psychological-impairment situations, understanding, or at least a smidgin of appreciation, can be found best by looking at the person's history.

Back To The Subject Himself

Wynn states, and common sense agrees, that specific dates and durations may be sketchy. Also preferring not to be too specific on family issues, Wynn says only that his father was in the Air Force and his mother was from the South. They met and married in California. Wynn was born in 1952 in a Midwest state, and the family relocated when he was a toddler. He grew up in a small isolated town.

Being "different" than the other children, Wynn felt shunned by his classmates—his being different had to do with having an unfostered high IQ and feeling painfully alone. He filled the void by reading voraciously, and by the first grade, he was reading at a fourth grade level.

Then by the fourth grade, Wynn was poring over adult literature and he began building his own library. As a teen, he started corresponding with Zen Buddhists all over America, and at age fifteen, Wynn received an invitation to join a Buddhist monastery. When the all-American teenager admitted that he didn't feel like getting up at four o'clock every morning, he decided to forget life as a monk.

Bored and unchallenged in high school, Wynn secured a GED (General Education Development) diploma and at age sixteen was accepted into a nearby state university. In order to gauge his academic level, Wynn was given French and English language tests. Then,

in his second quarter, he found himself in an upper-level philosophy class, and was told that if he stayed with the program for the first year, he could receive a full scholarship to attend Harvard. Feeling too "overintellectualized," as Wynn termed it, he dropped out of school after only two quarters.

He hitchhiked to Los Angeles, where he spent an indeterminable time wandering aimlessly up and down Santa Monica beach. There he met many mysterious, misplaced people who seemed to share his clouded state of mind.

After losing his glasses on the beach and finding himself virtually sightless, Wynn was arrested for vagrancy. The jail time lasted but one night, so he immediately left town and hitch-hiked up the coast to San Francisco.

Once in San Francisco, the now nearly blind Wynn was left to wander the streets, until a kind, older gentleman took him in. At age seventeen, the docile, presumably submissive Wynn had his first adult sexual encounter—an uninvited sexual encounter. Several days later, the bewildered and nearly sightless young man was hitching his way home to the Midwest.

The following two years turned into an emotional roller coaster.

Walt Dudley Itrich at home on the range

Wynn attempted suicide and spent time in and out of hospitals; he married and had a child, then left the family and decided to go back to college. Upon receiving a student loan for school, Wynn cashed the loan check and again headed for California. After only one week in his new apartment, he flew back to the Midwest to rejoin his wife.

Still undiagnosed, the twenty-year-old entered a psychiatric institution. Following a short but unsuccessful turn at therapy, he left the institute. Wynn claims that the problem had to do with communication, a plausible assessment—the psychiatrist was Filipino woman. Wynn and his wife divorced. He briefly took up with a male lover. Then Wynn packed a knapsack and again headed for California.

Back in Los Angeles, he found refuge at a private hostel or as residents termed it, a "crash pad." The hostel had strict rules; people could stay at night, but had to be out by nine am and not return until four pm; guests received two meals—morning and evening; illicit drugs were strictly forbidden.

After only two weeks, the astute and capable Wynn was asked to be manager of the hostel. Then one day the police arrived to investigate rumors of child abuse. Instead they found a patron carrying marijuana. As manager, and thereby held responsible, Wynn was arrested and spent the next five days in jail.

Upon release, he found that the crash pad had been closed down, which again placed Wynn out on the streets. Fear and paranoia led him to the sanctuary of LA's Griffith Park hills. It was from there that the police took him to the private clinic and secured residential facility.

While at the residential facility, Wynn applied for Social Security Disability money to pay for his stay at the facility; he was denied. The Social Security official told him that it would not be worth it to appeal the decision since it would most likely be in vain. In fact, more than 70 percent of appeals are successful. The private residential facility gave him two days notice before forcing him to leave. "Rest-stop therapy," Wynn termed it.

So, he lived on the streets, rummaging and begging for food and places to sleep. After several weeks, friends came to his aid, giving him somewhere to stay—a week here and a week there. The ever-motivated Wynn eventually landed a job as a hotel desk clerk, and found his own apartment.

Months later, Wynn renewed contact with his brother in Colorado. The brother convinced him to relocate to be with family members. Once in Colorado, Wynn again (in his words) "lost reality" and entered the Colorado Mental Health Institute in Pueblo.

The hospital's plan was brief therapy, then move the patient quickly back into society. The prime therapy for mentally-ill patients

seemed to be "meditation," which Wynn thought was ludicrous. After a brief stint in the hospital, he was transferred to a halfway house. Then following this three-month "rest stop," he again found himself out wandering, left to his own devices with the Borderline Personality Disorder still undiagnosed.

In the early 1980s, Wynn's mother, who now lived in Atlanta, awaited testing for breast cancer. She wanted Wynn to be there during her biopsy (which turned out to be noncancerous). Wynn moved to Georgia and managed to survive with more help from friends and family. He met and befriended a young psychiatrist.

The two men became housemates, then lovers. Suddenly, the psychiatrist, oblivious to any BPD, took over Wynn's medical treatment. As Wynn perceived it, the psychiatrist/lover had become controlling to the point of emotional rages. Wynn once again attempted suicide. He recalls that he stopped breathing and was hospitalized at the Georgia Regional Hospital in Decatur.

Once released from the hospital—another case of the rest-stop therapy used in California and Colorado, and likely, nationally—Wynn found himself a job with the local telephone company. The phone company trained him in the area of fiberoptics and related schematics drafting. He settled into a few relatively stable friendships—relatively stable—and took up a life of partying and sexual abandon.

Not Worn Out Yet

In 1987, a job opportunity opened in Washington, DC as a drafter at a telecommunications firm. With a stable well-paying job and a new circle of friends, normal life seemed at last to have settled in. Unfortunately, normal life for a gay man in his mid-thirties living in an Eastern metropolitan city may tend toward the reckless, and for a man with a mysterious mental disorder, downright hazardous. Wynn indulged in illicit drugs and, in his words, "total sexual escapism." In retrospect, Wynn wonders if he might have subconsciously been trying to commit suicide. Then in 1988, he tested positive for HIV, the virus which causes AIDS.

At the news, Wynn became psychotic, experiencing distorted visual perceptions, and began acting manically compulsive. For instance, when he walked to work he'd place his feet in the exact spots he had the day before. He started taking drugs indiscriminately. When even friends couldn't help him, he was taken to the psychiatric ward of Georgetown University

Hospital in Washington, DC.

After two months and new medications, his condition only worsened. In January 1989, hospital officials transferred him to nearby Baltimore's Sheppard and Pratt Hospital, reputed as one of the top five psychiatric facilities in the nation. Through his job at the telecommunications firm, Wynn held top notch medical insurance coverage, the best insurance money could buy, a plan equal to that of the president of the company.

At the new hospital, Wynn started out by self abusing. He burned himself with cigarettes at least two dozen times across his chest and stomach. Hospital officials put him on a strong antipsychotic drug—so strong he lost physical control to the point of drooling and wetting himself. The drug was withdrawn. Shortly thereafter, the doctors gave the diagnosis of Borderline Personality Disorder. Prior sexual abuse was suspected. After lengthy discussions with Wynn, a hospital psychiatrist stated that he believed the patient had been molested as a child. Wynn vehemently disagreed, but upon conferring with his mother, it was learned that as a young boy, he had been in the care of an uncle and aunt for three months. The parents had suspected that the uncle had molested not only Wynn, but a younger brother and cousin as well. Back in the1950s, the notion of abusing a child in such a way was unmentionable. Although the children had displayed unusual problems—one baby refused to nurse, and Wynn had strong psychological problems when it came to toilet functions—the only thing the parents could think to do was consult their family doctor.

A Diagnosis At Last

The National Institute of Mental Health was located in nearby Bethesda, and the Director of the Institute, at that time Dr. Lewis Judd, would visit Sheppard and Pratt once a month. The NIMH staff would pick a case for review, then with the attending physician's input, would interview and videotape the patient. That month's case happened to be Wynn's, and the diagnosis of BPD was confirmed.

In May of that same year, Sheppard/Pratt contacted the insurance company, stating that, fearing another suicide attempt, the hospital wanted Wynn to stay for one full year. But the best insurance money could buy denied continuing coverage.

Sheppard/Pratt doctors contacted Social Security, and this time, unlike in California, Wynn received his Disability and Supplemental incomes. He now had a viable diagnosis to report.

And Still The Masters Of Medicine Disagree

Even in the 1990s, a diagnosis of and even a definition of Borderline Personality Disorder remains controversial, even within the psychiatric community. While a cadre of psycho-experts has spent years defining the patterns of behavior that add up to BPD, other experts disagree, stating that BPD cases are either various degrees of Post Traumatic Stress, stemming from war experiences,or childhood trauma, or cases just too nebulous to warrant a specific diagnosis. The debate continues.

Wynn's eight-months stint in the two hospitals—Georgetown and Sheppard/Pratt from October 1988 through May 1989—constituted the longest period that he'd ever been institutionalized. The round-the-clock care plus therapy proved more beneficial than all the previous "rest-stop" therapies—that and the fact that doctors were at last able to specifically define Wynn's problem.

Since his release from Sheppard/Pratt, there have been no more suicide attempts, and only an occasional backsliding into self-abuse during the year following release (some cigarette burning), and a few residual phobias (occasional fear of crowds, and anxiety at any sudden movement).

After eleven years, Wynn no longer sees a therapist on an ongoing basis, but is on what is termed a "maintenance regimen" in which he takes medication and visits a therapist on a semi-regular basis. He maintains his own apartment in a special facility for people living with AIDS and HIV. Although reports state that he is HIV-positive, Wynn hasn't been diagnosed as having full-blown AIDS.

He has returned to university studies and is currently taking classes toward his Master's degree, all the while teaching Freshman English. Wynn fully plans to collect this degree and a doctorate within the next few years. Noting his record of accomplishment, odds have it that he'll succeed.

Lately, the idea of mental illness and disability as a public issue seems to have reached new heights in the public's mind—due in large to media attention. News stories from the latter 1980s to date tell of the hordes of mentally ill patients being legislated (through funding cuts) out of institutions and sent into the streets. Thankfully, public education and awareness about mental illness is on the rise. ✍

Walt Dudley, a man with MS, appeared on the cover of the Spring 1999 A-T. **I've Fallen And I *Still* Can't Get Up,** *Champion Press, Beverly Hills, CA and Portland, OR, is due out in July 2000.*

TO DUMP... OR NOT TO DUMP?

by PETER GEIGER

When It's Time To Leave Your Lover
by Neil Kaminsky, LCSW
is published by The Haworth Press, Inc., New York
292 pages, $24.95 in paperback

WHY REVIEW FOR A-T Magazine a book that not only doesn't address issues in disability, but even descends into promoting disability-unaware attitudes:

> *...how would you feel if someone told you that your ability to have an erection and an orgasm would be taken away forever? Isn't that a ghastly thought? Missing enjoyable sex is missing a great deal, and should never be considered part of the normal give and take in a relationship."* (p 75)

Mr. Kaminsky, whom I guess to be nondisabled, clearly would benefit from a tour of planet A-T, where gay men with spinal injuries and other conditions may have happy lives and sexually complete and fulfilled relationships—and may do so unperturbed by the "ghastly thought" that their body isn't quite like his. This glitch notwithstanding, *When It's Time to Leave Your Lover* is a must-read for any gay man with an interest in self-reflectivity and a desire to attain or improve the outcome of an intimate relationship.

It is a must-read, but it is a hard book indeed, since it highlights, unpityingly, everything we always feared about ourselves and intimacy, but always tried to sweep under the carpet of denial. The author, a psychotherapist who moved from New York to San Francisco a few years back, is courageous in politically-incorrectly—but I believe accurately—telling us that, well, there is some significant degree of correlation between our being gay men and our having problems in how we relate to people. Kaminsky tells us he has himself lived much of what he writes about, and there is power and emotion indeed in

some of his vignettes. When I closed the page on the first chapter I wanted to cry. It had come close to home. You too will also likely recognize something of your life in this book.

I like the book and the author very much, and believe *When It's Time* will repay repeated reading and reference. Kaminsky is writing about things that are difficult to feel, think, talk and write about. Though I found some passages jarring, stilted and annoying, I urge forgiveness: such problem passages are, I believe, an inescapable byproduct of the intricacies of undertaking a work of this magnitude. I warn you about the annoying bits, not to put you off reading the book, but to say don't let them put you off the whole.

Self-help books presuppose an audience skilled in the ways of psychotherapy. *When It's Time* goes even further, envisaging our using the book as a tool and model together with our therapist—which puts Kaminsky in a quasi-consultation role. Since therapists get sued a lot, be on the lookout for some excruciatingly legalese "disclaimer" passages in which he tells us what he as a professional, and as the book's author, is and is not able to do for us, the readers. Jargon is often hard on the non-professional reader and will create a further stumbling point for many, yet Kaminsky despite himself succumbs to our profession's tendency to keep the terminology of the seminar and case conference. Again I doubt if this could be otherwise: at the top of this page I have mentioned "vignettes" instead of saying something in plain language like, "stories taken and adapted from the lived experience of the author and his clients." We use jargon because it communicates efficiently, in this instance in one word instead of fourteen. Grit your teeth and persevere: it should repay you.

Also hard to read, but in a different way, are the almost bloodless "scripts" provided to illustrate how most appropriately to tell your lover you are leaving him, and your reasons. Here again I have considerable collegiate sympathy for Kaminsky, even as I critique these aspects of his book, since I am aware that it is next to impossible to make the highly important and useful points he needs to make—of how to language your taking responsibility for your decision to leave him; of how not to ascribe feelings, motivations, or blame to him; of how not to criticize or inflame him—without some fairly deadly speechwriting, such as:

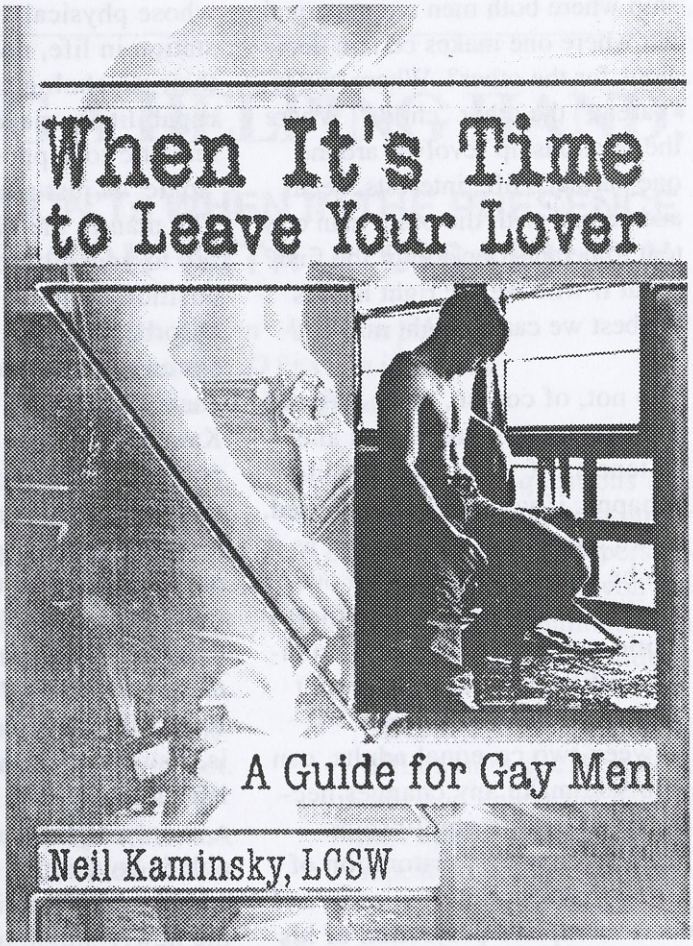
Jeff, I wanted to meet with you today to let you know that I have decided that I can no longer remain in this relationship with you. I would like to take some time now to explain why I have come to this decision. (p 88)

When you encounter passages like this, I suggest you try not so much to learn the lines, but to take into your heart the *principles* Kaminsky wishes to impart—in this case responsibility-taking and nonblaming but accurate communication. As I see it, it's not about the script: communication is a blend of words and vibes of which the vibes (feeling tone, attitude, intent) are actually the more important component. I think if you are vibing blame, the most therapeutically-correct script won't help you avoid a bad fight—and if you are vibing responsibility, you needn't worry too much about the words you use to deliver your message.

When It's Time will not be the easiest read for many. But reading it should repay the trouble for most. Structured as a "how to" guide to identifying when it's time to leave your lover and move on, and how best to put your leaving plans into effect, its wisdom and insights, often couched in language that appeared fresh and poetic to me, are generally applicable to all of us in any stages of relationship, from single and seeking through to happily married.

While its intent is to help a man to assess and "decouple" from a relationship which is, or has become damaging, *When It's Time* will likely for some have a "side" effect. Like many therapists, Kaminsky has an unflinching hierarchical value system wherein some ways of being in relationship are way ok, and some are way not ok. Although he has a disclaimer cautioning us not to do this, who among us buying a self-help book will not self-diagnose? Some of us may use the book to assess our spouse as "no longer meeting my needs" or as "toxic." Others will come to view ourselves as the toxic or psychological-baggage-ridden romantic partner. While such new awarenesses are given great weight and value within the therapy community, for the man in the trenches they can open the door from a lived experience more or less in equilibrium to a profound experience of disequilibrium when you realize that you, and/or your partner, are not fully emotionally healthy according to Mr. Kaminsky's ideals, and that you are truly more unhappy than you had realized. Thus enlightened, you could conceiv-

ably end up referring yourself to a therapist some time before you would have done so in the more normal course of events had your previous equilibrium been left to run its natural course. Is earlier insight "better" for you? Yes, if it saves you from some kind of irreversible harm, but who is really competent to say?



If it ain't broke, don't fix it! Kaminsky most probably does not intend to imply that we should be concerned about not measuring up to his partnership perfection ideals—but some of us are sensitive to implicit criticism and will take it on ourselves, after reading a self-help book, to blame ourselves and make ourselves miserable. I believe you are a better judge than Mr. Kaminsky, or indeed me, of what kind of relating is right for you, right now at this stage in your lifepath.

Growth and change are hard and often lead us not to the fantasized permanent plateau of enlightenment but rather only to the next level of temporary equilibrium, from which we must then ascend, when and if our time comes again to feel that something is wrong and we want to fix it.

Or put another way, maybe "dysfunctional" is in fact "normal." Maybe it's ok to have a relation-

ship where both men are not equal, but where one makes certain decisions for the other? Where one is "parent," the other "child." Where the relationship revolves around one partner's life, interests, needs and career, with the other man content to be an extension of the first? What if who we are right now is the best we can be right now?

I do not, of course, mean to deny and devalue my profession and its tenets. If you feel bad and/or unhappy, if you are being abused, or are abusing, it's as certain as it can be that you have fallen out of equilibrium. Therapy, and therapeutic constructs such as a mutually fulfilling, intimate (but not over-merged) relationship between two co-equal adults, can help you make any changes necessary to restore equilibrium. But let's have this restoration of *your* equilibrium be the goal, and not a therapist's projection of his fantasy of what an ideal male-to-male partner relationship might look like.

And, after you dump your lover, then what? If you are feeling weak and unlucky, and rate yourself lowly in the partnership-seeking stakes, you may see *When It's Time* as being written not for you, but for "the lucky and the strong," those men more endowed than you whose physical appearance and station in life, not to mention their psychological and emotional capabilities, makes it eminently realistic to suppose someone less "toxic" is just around the corner. The man in the vignette, you will say to yourself, may well be in a position to dump his too self-absorbed and controlling partner, but can *I* expect to get another chance at finding a partner? Kaminsky makes the important point that those of us whose romantic dreams are unrealistic may really not expect the man of our dreams to be out there waiting, but he goes little further than this to address concerns of *Is there life after I dump?* When Kaminsky says, be realistic, he is, I suspect talking to the fifty-ish (nondisabled) man who wants a twenty-eight year old (nondisabled) boyfriend. Whatever the "dating pool" realistically is for the newly-single men in the vignettes, what if *your* experience as a disabled man tell you that yours must necessarily be smaller? So isn't your "toxic" husband maybe better than no husband at all? These are hard questions, and if you are asking them of yourself, you probably do need someone to talk to, rather than a book to read. ✍

Peter Geiger, who is nondisabled is a San Francisco therapist.

GIVING A HELPING HAND:

DOs AND DON'Ts WHEN IN THE PRESENCE OF A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY.

Excerpts from A Pamphlet Created and Disseminated by Robert H. Brown

General Suggestions

Do remember the *Golden Rule:* "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

Do ask if you can be of assistance before you act.

Do think before you act; ask yourself, "How can I best assist?"

Do overlook things that are out of order in the home when visiting a person with a disability. **Don't** embarrass the person by trying to tidy up if not requested to do so.

Don't get insulted if your help is refused; most persons with a disability want to be independent. This will help them keep their self esteem.

Don't ask questions that would be embarrassing or offensive. Never ask personal questions unless you are very well acquainted with the individual.

Don't discuss a person's affliction or accident with the person unless the person brings up the subject. Never repeat anything which you have discussed.

Don't ever assume because a person has a physical disability that the person is useless or also has a mental disability. Let the person think and answer for her/himself.

Don't suggest cures, doctors, etc., unless well informed and the information or opinion is requested. Hearsay can be dangerous.

Don't park in a handicapped parking space without the proper license plate or placard in place.

Don't park too close to a handicapped parking space, in order that the lift, door or ramp of a handicapped equipped vehicle will have plenty of room.

Suggestions For Assisting The Person With A Mobility Disability

Do open doors only when needed or requested.

Do try to make "eye to eye"contact whenever possible when talking to a person with a disability. If the conversation is lengthy, try to find a quiet place where you can sit.

Do stand with your feet apart with a wide base of support; if needed to help a person out of a chair or wheelchair.

Do guide rather than lift a person when they are getting out of a chair or wheelchair. Let the person do as much as possible for her/himself.

Don't be a hero, ie. try to lift a person by yourself. When you do need to lift, always lift with the knees and not with the back.

Don't lean on the wheelchair when talking to a person.

Don't grab a person's arm to assist; offer your arm to the person to hold on to.

Suggestions For Assisting The Person With A Sight Disability

Do knock before entering a room.

Do let the person know that you have brought something, or when leaving that you are removing something.

Do take the person to the object you have brought, and let them touch it and explain its location.

Do replace items where you found them, or inform the person where you have placed an object.

Do place items within easy reach.

Do indicate to a person where you have placed on object or where they can find something they need.

Don't ever try to "pet" or play with a "seeing-eye" dog. It has been trained to respond to its master.

Don't make loud noises and startle a person with a sight disability.

Do always explain strange noises.

Suggestions For Assisting The Person With A Hearing Disability

Do talk slowly and distinctly, never mumble. Always face the individual when talking to the person.

Do maintain "eye to eye" contact.

Don't shout, especially when in the presence of a person with a hearing aid. Try to find a quiet place without distractions to carry on a conversation.

Don't stand in front of a light source, ie. window; rather stand or sit so the light shines on your face and hands.

Don't use exaggerated facial expressions or hand gestures since they may be confusing.

Don't make sudden moves.

Suggestions For Helping Children With A Disability

Do give children direct answers.

Do your best to answer all questions; don't be evasive.

Do let the child do as much as possible on his own, as long as he doesn't hurt himself.

Do encourage parents to teach their children how to relate to a person with a disability.

Do help a child to understand that he or she should never stare or make fun of a person with a disability.

Don't forget that children are not adults.

Don't be too protective. Let the child (or adult) tell you what they can or can't do.

Robert H. Brown, who is disabled, is a freelance writer; to obtain a copy of his pamphlet, send $1 and a business-sized stamped addressed envelope to:
Robert H. Brown, BA, MAE
650 Ridge Drive
Danville, PA 17821-8611

You

are cordially invited to

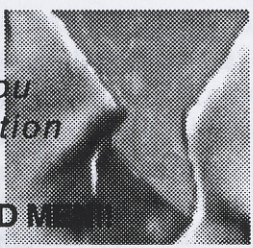
Cafe A-T 2000

~~**Sun Jan 23th/2-5pm**~~	**Sun Jun 18th/2-5pm**
~~**Sun Feb 20th/2-5pm**~~	**Sun Jul 16th/2-5pm**
~~**Sun Mar 19th/2-5pm**~~	**Sun Aug 20th/2-5pm**
Sun Apr 16th/2-5pm	**Sun Sep 17th/2-5pm**
Sun May 21st/2-5pm	**Sun Oct 22nd/2-5pm**

at: Dolores Park Cafe,
501 Dolores Street @ 18th
San Francisco, CA 94114

by kind permission of Dolores Park Cafe

In SF's gay Upper Market,
easily reached by BART/MUNI.
Join a bunch of good men like you
Friendly, w'chair accessible location



BE SEEN HAVING A GOOD TIME
WITH OTHER DISABLED/NONDISABLED MEN!!

ABLE-TOGETHER
POB 460053, SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94146, USA
***RSVP to:** Voice Mail—US: 415 522 9091
***RSVP to:** e-mail: ABLTOGETHR@aol.com

***dates and venues subject to confirmation: please leave your telephone number on the voice-mail so we can call you back**

Cafe A-T 2000 SF is hosted by A-T Inc board members. The Cafe is made possible through a generous grant of funds by The Horizons Foundation

You

are cordially invited to

Cafe A-T LONDON

~~**Sat Mar 25th/noon-3pm**~~ **Sat May 20th/noon-3pm**

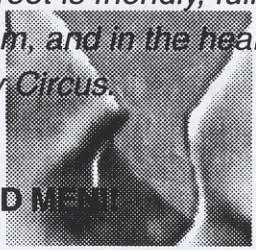
Sat Jul 15th/noon-3pm **Sat Sep 16th/noon-3pm**

Sat Nov 18th/noon-3pm

at: Rupert Street Cafe Bar,
50 Rupert Street, Soho, London W1

by kind permission of Rupert Street

Join a bunch of good men like you for brunch, coffee or what you will from Rupert Street's selection of well-priced and delicious food and drink. Rupert Street is friendly, fully wheelchair accessible, including restroom, and in the heart of Soho's gay village, close to Piccadilly Circus.

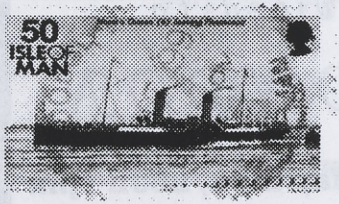


BE SEEN HAVING A GOOD TIME
WITH OTHER DISABLED/NONDISABLED MEN!

Cafe A-T London is sponsored by **ABLE-TOGETHER**
POB 460053, SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94146, USA
***RSVP to:** [44] - [0]1582 705257
***RSVP to:** e-mail: AbleTo_UK@europe.com
*dates and venues subject to confirmation: please leave your telephone number on the voice-mail so we can call you back

Cafe A-T 2000 London is hosted by Doug Groom.

BACK TALK



LETTERS
VOICE-MAIL
E-MAIL

ABLE-TOGETHER may print extracts from your communications, identified by your initials and state, unless you specifically ask us not to

HOW TO REACH US

E-MAIL:
ABLTOGETHR@aol.com
VOICE MAIL/US:
415 522 9091
VOICE MAIL/UK:
01453 832782
LETTER POST:
ABLE-TOGETHER
P. O. Box 460053
San Francisco
CA 94146 USA

OPINION

I'd like to answer the question, "Why don't the personals work better?" It's because our ads are censored and we are not allowed to state whether we prefer to be a top or bottom.

I have talked to four other subscribers and they felt the same way.

DK, Illinois

Frankly, I see nothing wrong with someone describing themselves as a top or bottom, though I really wonder if the inclusion of one word will really get that much more response. I would wonder also if the response generated was because the person thought I sounded like an interesting character, or a ready and willing hole to be filled at the drop of a pants.

But that's neither here nor there. A-T always reserves the right to edit or pull ads, which we print as a courtesy to subscribers. After discussing it with Blaine and Peter, we've agreed there is really no reason to censor things like "top" or "bottom," but we will continue to edit ads which are overly fetishistic or otherwise problematic. The personal ads are a starting point, a way for men to connect and to "take it from there." I'm sure we've all had the experience of writing to or talking by phone to someone who sounds ideal (ie: hot and fuckable), only to meet face to face with someone resembling Uncle Fester on a bad day (though some people may like that). Please don't count on an ad for a quick fuck.

PRAISE

I think that this Magazine is super

BG, Massacussetts

Hey, BG, thanks for dropping the note and giving us a vote of confidence. One thing I've learned already is that it is impossible to please everybody, so hearing you think our Magazine is super is a real boost.

STILL ROLLIN'

I am a physically challenged GBM 44, with muscular dystrophy who is hell on wheels. I live in San Bernadino, CA. I would like to become a member and meet men who have an open mind, and accept me as I am. A horny man no different than theirselves, just physically challenged who still likes to have wild sex. Also, I would like to subscribe to your Magazine. Please send me a copy of your most current issue. I'd like to place an ad in your next publication.

RC, California

RC, we're certainly glad to get your ad and add you to our list of subscribers. You do bring up a good point: just because someone is disabled or physically/mentally challenged doesn't mean they automatically give up on sex or intimacy. I think it's one of the basic, "I don't want to think of it so I'll just ignore it and it'll go away," issues. Sexuality is a normal desire, yet try to imagine your parents or grandparents actually getting together and "bumping uglies!" Immediate "ick" response and into the furthest recesses of the mind it goes. Yet, sex and sexuality are there, a part of life. I think we have a social stigma to overcome, which goes back to the "crip-as-hero" article we ran in the last issue: oftentimes the abled view the disabled as noble warriors, facing the challenges of life with a brave face and an iron jaw, and the thought that one of our "heroes" is less than godlike and prone to the same cravings as the rabble—eating, loving, going to the bathroom, snoring and making funny wet noises when we sleep—is not acceptable.

Of course we'll continue to explore the area of sex and it's many variations, as well as other items: coming up in a later issue we'll be looking at things like fetishism and Munchausen By Proxy syndrome, as well as something I like to call the "Baby Jane Complex" where the primary caregiver/partner/lover goes from being the helpmate to the keeper. So, welcome—and stay tuned! ✍

A GUIDE TO CONTACT AD LISTINGS

How to Reply to a Coded Ad: Put your letter in an envelope, seal it, and put the A-T code # of the advertiser you are replying to in the top right corner of the envelope; if you know your A-T code #, put this (or your initials) in the bottom left corner; **do not put your return address on this envelope**; put this envelope, together with the correct reimbursement for forwarding, please, (see below), in another envelope. This outer envelope should have your return address: seal, address to A-T and mail! You may respond to as many coded ads as you wish, and put all the code-numbered envelopes in the one outer envelope to mail to us.

Content: We believe the best kind of ad is the one that gives the reader the most accurate idea of who you are. We therefore encourage ad length (but reserve the right to edit) and accurate statements of personal statistics such as age and weight. Bear in mind that A-T readers are likely to want to know whether you are disabled or nondisabled, so please include this information. Try to be as detailed as you can about yourself and your way of being and presentation in the world, because it very greatly helps both you and potential responders if they can gain a reasonable picture of you from the ad. ***We encourage changes and updates to ads!***

Editing Policy: Although ABLE-TOGETHER strives without judgment to encourage honest self-expression we are aware that many of our subscribers may feel depersonalized and objectified in response to certain personal contact ad material. Because of the importance A-T attaches to avoiding objectification and depersonalization in interpersonal relations, we may edit personal contact ads which seem to us to contain sexually overly explicit or overly fetishistic material.

Deadlines: ABLE-TOGETHER needs your ad copy by 5th March for Spring issue, 5th June for Summer issue, 5th September for Fall issue and 5th December for Winter issue. New, renewed or changed ads reaching us after these dates are not guaranteed to appear in the issue published at the beginning of the next month.

Postage: ABLE-TOGETHER does not seek to profit from forwarding replies to coded contact ads but we do ask that you send us full reimbursement for our postage costs in forwarding your reply to the advertiser:

- for US responses to US advertisers, this is a 33ct stamp;
- for US responses to Canada, this is a 46ct stamp;
- for US responses to advertisers outside the US or Canada, this is a $1 stamp;
- for overseas responders who do not have US stamps and wish to send a $1 bill, this will cover three replies within the US or two to Canada or one elsewhere; but please note that these rates are for minimum-weight letters; heavier items cost more to send, and when in doubt, please check at the post office.

Payment: Remittance of forwarding costs may be made to ABLE-TOGETHER in valid US postage stamps, in currency, or by personal check or money order drawn in US Dollars. Please, no international reply coupons or foreign currency checks for this purpose. All payments are sent to us at sender's risk. A-T does not accept responsibility for materials sent to us to be forwarded, and we reserve the right to destroy materials not accompanied by adequate reimbursement for forwarding costs. ✍

PERSONAL CONTACTS INITIATED THROUGH ABLE-TOGETHER CONTACT AD LISTINGS ARE DONE SO ENTIRELY AT THE RISK AND ON THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PERSONS CONCERNED: WE ENCOURAGE **YOU** TO **MAKE SURE** YOU ARE DOING WHAT YOU WANT TO BE DOING, AND WITH THE PERSON YOU WANT TO BE DOING IT WITH; IF YOU DECIDE TO BE SEXUAL WITH SOMEONE YOU ARE VERY STRONGLY URGED **FIRST** TO CALL YOUR LOCAL AIDS/STD HOTLINE FOR ADVICE.

The A-T personal contact ads are divided into two sections. The BUDDY section is for advertisers who are not seeking contacts of a romantic or sexual nature. Respondents looking for contact that will lead to sex or romance should reply only to ads in the MORE THAN A BUDDY section.

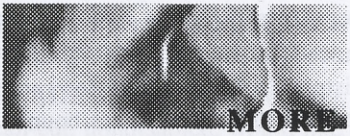
Seeking

A BUDDY

BUDDIES

CENTRAL FLORIDA. Former hotel manager from Washington DC and San Francisco area. Now retired in the sun with Mickey Mouse, and Bear, my companion golden retriever. Sensitive, caring, 48 yo, 5'8", 150 lb., and goodlooking, nonsmoker, light drinker (cheap date, drunk on half a bottle of champagne). Keep fit by working out at local wellness center 5 days a week. I am partially disabled from a prior brain tumor, but have remained whole in mind and spirit. I don't drive, but use a scooter to get around outside and maintain independence. I enjoy gardening, cooking, going out to eat, ice cream socials, Indian artifacts, and communing with nature. Keep my sense of humor sharp by watching humorous sitcom although enjoy reality of Touch by Angel. I value humor, kindness, honesty, and above all communication. If you possess these qualities I would love to hear from you. *David Kenny, 510 Cranes Way #107, Altamonte Springs, FL 32701,* or ph: 407 339 2734.

FL



MORE THAN BUDDIES

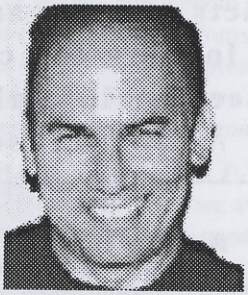
Seeking

MORE THAN A BUDDY

ARIZONA. Hi! I'm Joe, a GWM 35 who resides in Phoenix. Over the past several years I have dealt with renal failure (from diabetes) that has finally led me to receive a kidney transplant. While return-

AZ

ing my life back to a course of normal routine, I unfortunately encountered an accident which has led to the loss of my right leg. I am now currently involved in physical therapy, learning to walk with a prosthetic leg. Even though my leg is gone, that does not affect the person who I am. I enjoy life and plan to live it to the fullest. I do not believe I have to seek forth and find someone in order to make my life happy. If love is going to occur, it more than likely will catch you off guard. I would love though to hear from others to correspond with and perhaps strike up a friendship. I enjoy roller coatser riding, travel, good company, movies, music, Disney collectibles and learning knowledge from others and the grand scheme of life. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1936,* or **E-mail: Rose_Joseph@msn.com**



LA AREA. 41 year old recent double amputee (LAK/RBK) seeks new friends. I enjoy movies, theater and travel. I like the outdoors and physical activity. I am a gym goer and like to challenge myself. I would like to hear from someone who is upbeat and positive and takes care of himself. Let's get on with life together. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1922,* or **E-mail: briansky@wemedia.net**

N CALIFORNIA. GWM 50's, 175#, 5'10", br/blue, nice looking, nondisabled, educated, masculine, sincere, affectionate and gentle, GSOH and moral values. Enjoy cultural activities, outdoors, reading, cooking, it's sharing the activity that's more important than the activity. Healthy lifestyle, swim, and play tennis. I have always been attracted to older men and would like to meet a 60+ post polio gentleman, who is caring, positive and independent, for honest, caring friendship/relationship. Most important is the "person" not the disability! *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #718.*

OAKLAND. Able GWM, 52, 6'4", 180#, open to meet new friends for conversation, local travel in my car, home cooked candlelight dinners, quality films and videos, wide range of music from romantic to classical. All are welcome. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1811,* or **E-mail: compeace@concentric.net**

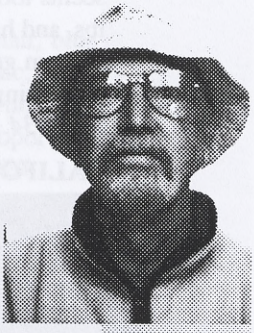
CALIFORNIA. GWM 62, weigh 225#, 5'8", very hirsute. I moved to LA from NYC after teaching American history in high school for more than 25 years. I have MS and am wheelchair-bound. I am loving and outgoing. I am looking for friendship, preferably with someone younger. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #436.*

CALIFORNIA. I'm a middle-aged GWM, 5'10", 200 lbs., using crutches occasionally when my ankle flares up. I am seeking a young man, disabled or nondisabled, preferably under 40, for friendship/romance/possible relationship. My interests include classical music, movies, museums, dining out. *Michael, POB 4054, Berkeley, CA 94704.*

SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA. GWM 52, 5'6", 155 lbs, polio survivor and cane user, iso black or dark-complexioned GM. Want to add zest to my life and having a man in my arms who truly wants to be there brings a sparkle to my eyes and a smile to my face. I lead an active and busy life, so when I stop, I'm tired. I'm looking for someone who is fairly quiet, gentle—shy ok—who desires to connect on a physical and emotional level ranging from occasional dates to sex buddy, boyfriends, soul-mates—let's let the connection between us decide where we go. I neither offer nor expect physical perfection, but hope for chemistry. I'm emotional, sometimes sad, but mostly level-headed and very stable: "walking the talk" is what I offer you, and hope to receive. Please call 415 621 2938 before 9 pm PDT, or *replies with correct postage please to A-T #1224.*

NE CALIFORNIA AREA. 50-something GWM seeking correspondence with all who reply. Goodlooking, so I've been told, gregarious/altruistic by nature/disposition. HIV-negative. Enjoy/use only safe sex practices. Live in High Desert. Clean shaven, shaven head—not skin head. 6'4", 210 lbs., looking for similar like-minded significant other candidates. *Micheal George Cordes, Post Office Box 1041, Bishop, CA 93515-1041.*

SACRAMENTO, CAL. I am a 55 year old GWM, weighing 190#, HIV-neg., mustache, balding auburn/grey hair, blue-green eyes, average looks, retired case worker (social services). Have Peripheral Neuropathy and walk with a cane. I'm hoping to meet somebody around my age with similar interests for friendship, or possibly a long term relationship. You can be disabled or nondisabled, of any race. I'm caring, sincere, honest, down to earth and have a wild sense of humor. My interests lie in so many areas and I'm always willing to learm, have a curious mind. Let the interior shine through as thew exterior is only as mask! Bud. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1505.*

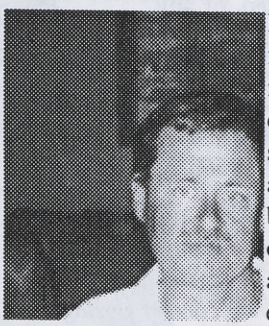


SAN BERNADINO AREA. GWM 60, 6'5", 200#, professional, caring, clean-cut, nondisabled, would like to meet a thin, lonely, disabled man 35-65, who is masculine and sincere. Friendship desired and maybe more. Will answer all. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1847.*

NEW KID IN TOWN! BiWM writer, mid-30s, brown hair, blue eyes, wheelchair user, short-statured. Just starting to explore my attraction to the same sex and I'm looking for gay or bi men aged 20-40 to explore it with—for friendship, relationship, whatever develops. Likes: alt-rock, indie film, good food, good conversation, good sex, and a good laugh (not necessarily in that order). Prefer So. Calif. area but all correspondence is welcome. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1396.*

SAN DIEGO. Looking for local quality men/boys 18-? who are comfortable enough around disability to overcome their fear of it. I had polio when I was 2 years old. I have always used a wheelchair and enjoy new technology when it becomes available. Though I am actively out of the rat race now, I have practiced law, built and sold real estate, had several small businesses. I appreciate intelligent conversation, affection, truthful and reliable friends, and creative, spontaneous and playful lovers. I love being loved by a man who is a giver and emotionally available. Although I am very self sufficient and not looking for an attendant, an intimate companion has made it possible in the past to do things I could never do alone…help at the right time is a very bonding thing! I use a power wheelchair, own my own home and car. I look and act straight but am out to anyone who's interested. I'm not good at long distance relationships or friendships. I'm attracted to lean, boyish types who also are responsible and mature. The gay scene is not my lifestyle merely because I have never felt very welcome in it and it seems too limiting. I am 54, blond, blu, 5'3" (if I could stand), 110 lbs, and have skinny legs and right arm, spinal curvature, great smile and am generally admired in my community. If any of this sounds interesting to you please write: *Jarrod, 1010 University Ave., PMB534, San Diego, CA 92103,* or **E-mail: jarrods212@aol.com**

CALIFORNIA. GWM 52, 5'6", 145#, blu, br, 'stache, 18 years hemiplegic wheelchair user, eager for So. Ca. friends, nondisabled or not. I am a former hotel manager and now do AIDS volunteer work. I enjoy life, lite-health cooking, dining, conversations, classical music, opera, movies, theaters, museums, etc…Drink wine but not into bars or scene, do not smoke or do drugs. Also open to able compatible housemate & daily aide to share my beach area condo (lo-expenses). Be discreet. *Tom, 1525 Appleton #302, Long Beach, CA 90802, ph: 562 436 2880.*



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA. Charlie, 56, 6', 180 lbs, blond/blue, mild heart condition, no problem for 10 years now. Seeking LTR with compatible mate. Enjoy cuddling, quiet times, talks, walks, traveling, SS, and you? Write, let's see what happens, photo appreciated. Be sincere. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1455.*

COLORADO. Toothless Boytoy or Mantoy. Spanish/German GWM with CP, ambulatory, 50 years young, salt & pepper, beard & mustache, brown eyes, 5'4", 130 lbs, HIV-neg. I want to meet stable, healthy, talentedly-oral "Daddy-type" GWMs, nondisabled and disabled, 30-60 yrs. I have a lot to offer the right goodlooking deserving man. You must meet my requirements as I must meet yours. Positive responses gets positive results. Interested GWMs please write with photo (returned upon request) and I will send you mine. Look forward to some good times. Thank you. *Mr. Luis Perez, 1955 Arapahoe Street #806, Denver, CO 80202-1834,* or ph: 303 291 0806.

COLORADO. Early retired GWM, N/S, N/D, teddy bear type guy with clipped beard, hairy, is looking for LTR, handicapped or not, Into antiques, thrift store, flea market, classic cars, concerts, off-beat film, trips and you. Looking for sane same who is interested in not being alone, has some income, and not into gay lifestyle. *Occupant, POB 38471, Colorado Springs, CO 80937.*

DELAWARE. Hi! My name is Frank Veasey, 38 year old disabled SGWM, 5' 11" tall, brown hair, blue eyes, 205 lbs. I'm a top. I'm caring, honest, fun, loving, in search of LTR and penpals 30-40 preferred, disabled or not, must be bottom. *Frank Veasey, POB 838, Bear, DE 19701-0838.*

DC AREA. Abled GM, young 50, 5'1", 125 lbs, brown hair, blue eyes, 'stache, glasses. Smoker, light drinker. Interests—music, dancing, long walks, swimming, intelligent tv, old movies, quiet nights at home. Race/disability friendly, seek same, height-weight proportionate. Your photo gets mine. *POB 27, Lanham, MD 20703-0027.*

WASHINGTON DC AREA. Black male, hemiplegic on the left side, stroke survivor, 46 years, 29 inch waist, HIV-neg., smooth skin, shaved head, would like to explore my feelings for men disabled or nondisabled bisexual or gay. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1871.*

FLORIDA. GWM 43, 6', 200 lbs, br/br, nondisabled, in search of GWM 20-50 disabled who walks with crutches. I am an honest, caring, trustworthy male who is seeking to welcome new friends into my life. All correspondence will be answered. *Michael Kirnard, 1025 N. Thorpe Ave., Orange City, FL 32763.*

FLORIDA. My name is Matthew F. GSM 26, 5'7", 165#, Hispanic, black hair, brown eyes, nondisabled. In need of a fine male with/without limitation (disability). I say limitation because out there is not disability, should be called limitation. Limitations that we have to overcome and live with! I would like to find the special male that I can share the good and bad moments of my life with. Someone that I can trust as my best friend, someone that can share with me his life too. I enjoy nature and travel, I like to cook and have a good time at home or out. Will answer all. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1898.*

S. FLORIDA. Very tall, thin with smooth, athletic build, nondisabled, long brown hair, hazel eyes, 43 but looks 24-28 (can send pic). Grad. education spans spirituality, psychology and film. Interests include movies, music, mysticism and science. Caring, socially conscious Christian with lofty goals as a writer. Not looking for a sex partner, but can be romantic and very affectionate. Seeking a young (under 28 preferably under 23), thin guy. You can be nondisabled or have metabolic, genetic, neuromuscular (eg. SMA) or other condition with muscular atrophy or weakness—but with a big heart! *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #489,* or **E-mail: NiftyTall@aol.com**

MIAMI. GWM 31, 5'11". I have blond hair, blue eyes, and am a very handsome guy. Interests include working out, travel, art, films, and I love the beach! T-4 para for about 5 years now. I'm seeking stable, successful, athletic type guys. Please include a photo with your response. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1761.*

GEORGIA. Is it you? Are you the man who'll help me mend my broken heart? Attractive Puerto Rican, 47, s&p, mustache, Cancerian, low level paraplegic, would like to correspond with able-bodied & healthy, trim-sided men. Interested in cultivating relationship w/guys from just friends to potential lifemates. Would really like to find a special man who is semi-retired or with the ability to take time off from work, so we can spend time getting acquainted. I'm a sexual, passionate man & able to love from a deep, secure place. I love men of all ages, enjoy being romantic & w/the right man my kisses will have you reaching for s-h-i-t that ain't there! I love to laugh, appreciate a sense of humor, and am a US Chef's Open Gold & Silver medallist. Enjoy exercising, riding my handcycle & the outdoors. Love to cuddle while watching a movie, have strong, tireless hands & adore massaging my man from top to toe & everything in between! Job-wise, while recovering from a second back injury, presently working on developing specialty food items to sell via Internet. If I've spiked your interest and you can dig my strong arms and skinny legs,

please drop me a line and tell me about yourself. What are your hopes, goals & dreams? I would really like to know. Your photo gets mine. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #211,* or **E-mail: butchare@alltel.net**

CHICAGO. White male, short, slim (5'6", 130 lbs.) have slight spinal curvature, orthopedic shoe with lift gives me slight limp. Would like to hear from local in-shape guys (a handicap is no excuse). I'm working on my abs! Chicago N. Side, N. Burbs, student long hair a plus. I'm substance free. 8-1-Birthday at Oak Street Beach? Foreign corrrespondents welcome. A good friend, great smile mean a lot! Let's explore Chicago and its ethnic restaurants. Possible trip to Palm Beach Fall 1999! *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #062.*

ILLINOIS. Half Polynesian Gay Male, black hair, brown eyes, 03/20/62, 199 lbs., 5'11", alcohol/drug free. Bipolar Disorder. Animal lover—I have one deaf cat. I support animal causes and environmental concerns. I like penpaling, 'zines, and True Crime Stories. I'm shy at first, but have a quirky (or kinky) sense of humor. *Dana Kiger, 214 E. 7th. St. Apt. #215, Gibson City, IL 60936,* or **E-mail: Dana_Delightful@excite.com**

ILLINOIS. 46 yo GWM with multiple sclerosis looking for friendship, romance, whatever. I use a cane. I use Viagra. I self-catheterize. For someone who is very inexperienced I get around. I look like Drew Carey. I act like the Dalai Lama. I'm a recovering crack addict on Prozac. Take a chance, I love to cuddle. Write me at *POB 09166, Chicago, IL 60609.*

MASSACHUSSETTS. Gwm born 8/8/62, 5' 2", 185lbs, blue eyes, brown hair, mustache. I was born with a rare disability called *lymphatic vascular malformations.* Which means—1 *hemangioma:* a benign growth of rapidly dividing cells that form extra blood vessels; 2 *vascular malformation:* a permanent collection of abnormal capilliaries, veins, or lymphatics, occurring either as single channel type or in combination. So what does this mean for me? Well, I have a bigger left hand than normal, I am in constant pain all day and my right leg is affected by this and I can't do much walking; sometimes I use a cane. My interests are tv, music, hand-made crafts, photography, basketball, stamp collection, bank collection, swimming, bowling, playing cards and board games and many more things. If you are a nonsmoker, honest, trustworthy, loyal and caring, please send photo and phone. Looking for friends and possible relationship. *Bobby, 33 Merri Village, Merrimac, MA 01860,* ph: 978 346 4495, or **E-mail: rship33@aol.com**

IMPROPER BOSTONIAN... GWM 50+, bilateral a/k amputee, learning to walk in prosthetics, but know the wheelchair will be part of my everydays...Wish to get together with another man who accepts that I am in the process of learning how to share/express my preferred activities in ways which must adapt to present physical parameters...NO VANILLA, SCENTS, COLOGNE OR HAIRSPRAY...Am pierced and tattooed, prefer leather, latex, and levis. Other interests include music, handcrafts, 3D jigsaw puzzles, travel, museums, good food, foraging through second hand stores/flea-markets, theater, and oriental art. Am doing the groundwork to start a local AMPUTEE SUPPORT GROUP...welcome contact with other amputees in this area who have also been going forward on their own. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1899,* or **E-mail: metalfeet@hotmail.com**

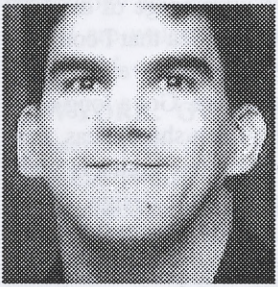
MASSACHUSSETTS. GWJM 28, 5'5", 160, brown eyes, brown hair, clean-shaven, and HIV-neg. I'm caring, warm, honest, and very lovable. I have problems with my vision due to optic nerve damage, but I am independent. I like romantic nights at home, going to the movies, bowling, going to dinner, and shopping. I am looking for disabled or nondisabled friends and a possible relationship to share my interests who are between the ages of 25-40 and HIV-neg. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1921.*

MASSACHUSSETS. There aren't enough men. Gay man, 30, enjoys rural life, going pretty places in a car, art, old movies, plays, heavy rock music, show tunes, Al Green (what a babe), film fests, strong, manly men with dark hair who like to be kissed, Tank Girl. Not into drugs, alcohol, psych meds, therapists, social climbing, s/m. Interested in hostory, reading, riding my bike, learning new stuff, Judaism. I have dark hair and eyes, slight build. I like white men, black men, Latino men, usually under 45. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1919.*

MICHIGAN. Nondisabled GWM, 6', 180 lbs, would like to meet/correspond with guys who are amputees and/or wear dentures. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #799.*

MINNESOTA. I'm a 39 year-old masculine GWM who's intellectual, warm, and witty. I have bipolar disorder. I like to banter about the absurdities of the day (often political); engage in good conversation; give hugs; conjugate irregular French verbs; spend time at home; and I love the beach in all seasons. I'm affectionate; sexual; irreverent; 5'11", brown hair, blue eyes, 210#. I'm hoping to meet another bipolar/nonbipolar guy, 30-40, who's intelligent, emotionally available, sexual, funny, with a sense of social justice for friendship, and a possible LTR. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1946.*

NEW JERSEY. Outgoing, energetic, dynamic, nondisabled 49 yo GWM, 5'10", HIV-neg., with brown hair and hazel eyes, seeks the joy and pleasure of meeting a young, body-building, above-knee amputee for creative friendship. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1229.*



NEW JERSEY. GWM 35, 5'10", 170 lbs. "As Good As It Gets." Have had Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) for 19 years, for which I receive SSD. I enjoy hugs, affection, touching, holding and being held, watching TV and movies, driving, traveling, humor, gay events/meetings, talking on the 'phone, swimming pools, singing, and my cat, Brownie. I am seeking a loving friendship, and a long-term relationship. I am pretty liberal and have Christian beliefs. I don't smoke or drink and prefer you be the same. I prefer a good-looking man with a pretty hairy chest and arms, but clean shaven. I like men 21-48, HIV-neg., caring, honest, trustworthy, very affectionate, romantic, easygoing and sensitive. Can relocate for the right person. Please include recent photo. Call or write. *Jeff Woerner, POB 7049, Plainfield, NJ 07060-0799,* or ph: 908 769 3665. God bless you.

CENTRAL NEW JERSEY. GWM 44, 5'9", 195#, legally disabled 1988 with major depression, anxiety, chronic fatigue, arthritis, back and leg pain, and severe temporomandibular injury, pain and dysfunction (much of which is iatrogenic—resulting from orthodontia). I use a cane to walk and must rest and recline often. I also use dental splints at home. I receive SSD, and live with my parents. I have average to good looks. As my disabilities permit, I enjoy: gay community stuff, civil liberty, gentle conversation, television and films, nature, gardens, art, photography, music, silence. I especially appreciate the understanding of friends. E.M. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1895.*

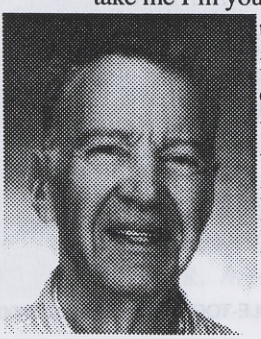
NEW YORK. GWM, 45, 5'11", 155 lbs, good youthful muscular looks, swimmer's body, brown hair, hazel eyes, multilingual, nondisabled; interested in travel, reading, music from opera to house, and cooking; seeking disabled friend, 25-45,—especially if you are Arab, Indian or Latino. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #278.*

NEW YORK. Hi! My name is Doug, a GWM 50, 5'11", 165-170 lbs, HIV-neg., with very slight cerebral palsy. I'm looking for a guy with or without a disability in age range 35-50. After work I'm into the performing arts, concerts, ballets, opera, lectures, and so on. I do not let my handicap keep me from doing the things I like or want to do but I want to meet the right guy to fill the other void in my life. Please be disease-free and a non-smoker. If you are interested send 'phone and photo to: *POB 275, Bronx, NY 10461.*

NEW YORK. Attractive, nondisabled w/m with Daddy Bear looks and attitude, 51 yrs., 6', 275 lbs, mostly white beard and moustache, close-cropped hair, hairy body, piercings and tats, and the imagination to go beyond a partner's physical limitations. Long time disability activist interested in meeting men with a wide range of disabilities/differences. Enjoy guys comfortable with the idea that I could be attracted to them and their disabilities. But also love exchanging thoughts with guys new to being an object of desire. Got a long-term lover, but still seeking like-minded guys who I can share ideas, fantasies, fetishes, and yes, some rewarding one-on-one contacts with. Non-sexual interests include writing, theatre, costume design, crafts, music (Broadway to Bach, but little Rock). A body is a terrible thing to waste. Let's not be putt off by our differences, let's revel in them!. Call Max at 718 852 1960 or **E-mail: BKBearMax@aol.com** or *replies with correct postage please to A-T #919.*

NEW YORK. Goodlooking GWM 41, nondisabled. I work in the arts and travel frequently. I am looking for disabled male friends for fun and whatever that may lead to. Guys ages 20-50 - perhaps with wheelchair, braces, post-polio—all welcomed. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #384.*

NEW YORK. My name is Tom. I am 44 year old male. I am 5'5", 138 lbs., brown hair and goatee. I have my own business and am also an exhibiting artist in the US and Japan. Recently I had a one person show in New York and am preparing for another in August. I enjoy unique people, good conversation and humor. I am a friendly and caring individual who is looking for other disabled persons who want friendship, companionship and love. We have nothing to lose and everything to gain by getting together. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1880,* or **E-mail: TShnei554@aol.com**

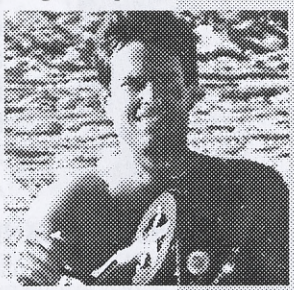


NEW YORK. I am 72, 6'0", 160 lbs, nondisabled, nonsmoking, trim, exercised build, retired, glasses, grey/brown, hairy; seek affectionate, take me I'm yours, table for two, 24 hrs togetherness type. Like ocean travel, europe, art, museums, movies old and new, eating, documentaries, mysteries with a cuddler. I don't drive and live near 3 museums, central park, every convenience. Not turned on by disabilites. Want someone who wants home life, security, much devotion and more; are you trim, well-built, genuine, in need of caring, like antiques, perhaps willing to relocate? *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1928.*

NEW YORK. GWM 30, 5'8", 155, br/br, playwright, college-educated, wheelchair user, fit and healthy, looking to meet new friends and possible relationship with a nondisabled or disabled guy who is smart, funny and kind. My interests include theatre, film, politics, psychology and good conversation. NYC area and under 35 a plus, but all are welcome. *John. Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1604,* or **e-mail: thepoodle@aol.com**

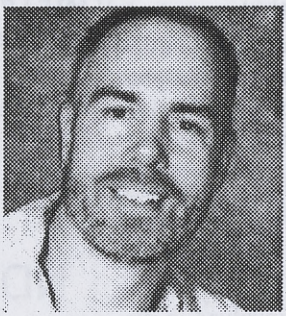
NEW YORK. GWM, 30 y/o, with Muscular Dystrophy, motorized wc user. I am 5'5", 150#, dark brown hair, brown eyes, Italian-American (which means I'm hairy). Starting grad school in Sept 1999 to become a guidance counselor. I love dining out, listening to disco music (yes, disco), & shopping. I'm heavily involved in disability activism/politics. I dislike bars/clubs. Looking to meet someone 25-40 y/o, disabled or not. You are humorous, optimistic, nonconformist, simplistic, considerate, and don't drink or use drugs. Seeking replies from NYC & Long Island. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #161,* or **E-mail: atrocchia@webtv.net**

ADIRONDACK MTS, NY. GWM 43, look much younger, handsome mountain man, 5'6", 150#, br/br, chest hairy, funny, honest, deaf (ASL), C6-7 incomplete quadriplegic—caused by diving accident—look like paraplegic; healthy, down-to-earth, vegetarian, ex-ski instructor/racer. Very active person outdoors: hiking, campfire, chain saw, garden, wash my van, shovel the snow, hand cycling, swimming, travel, gay campground (all-male campground—fantastic!), wheelchair racquetball, weighlifting, bowling, also like indoor tropical trees and love my 2 dogs, Golden Retriever and German Shepherd. I have 2 jobs, I am an Architectural Barrier Consultant at Independent Living Center and I have a small business as woodworking. My business name is "Adirondack Woodcraft" that is cool! I want to share my or your place and my love the right guy. I love to have sex. Horny and get really hard. I will attend Abililities Expo in Metro NYC on April 14-16. Glad to trade a pic just ask. *Billy Searles, 112 Green Mansions Rd. 10A, Chestertown, NY 12817,* or **E-mail: BUMSKIER@WEBTV.NET**



NORTH DAKOTA. Walt here, and I'm still lost out on the Dakota prairie. I was hatched here in 1952 (do the math), but escaped in 1970 and went to college in L.A. and Seattle. Most of the '70s were spent globetrotting with a gospel (sort of)-jazz/rock band. My MS surfaced while I was on the road in Europe back in 1973. After a year off, touring resumed until health said "no more." Following careers from graphics designer to public relations, I ended up back in

ND. Although health keeps me fairly sedentary, politics and disability issues keep me active. I am now a freelance writer for various periodicals, and my book, "I've Fallen and I *Still* Can't Get Up," a commentary on disability, is scheduled for release by Champion Press in July (Amazon.com & B & N). When occasionally not in the wheelchair, I stand at 5'9" and tip the scale at 160#. Obviously, my salt and pepper crew cut is fast becoming history, but I do sport a trimmed beard. Despite growing up in an evangelical-fundamentalist home, my spiritual journey has taken me elsewhere. Interests exclude dope, tobacco, too much booze, and "political correctness;" interests include politics, music from opera to Elton, intelligent conversation and meeting someone of like mind. If you connect with any of the above, let's communicate: *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1295* or **E-mail: wdudley@pop.ctctel.com**

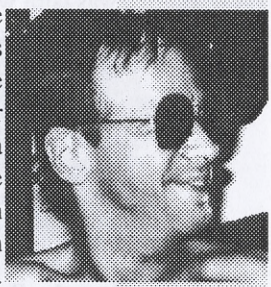


CLEVELAND, OHIO. GWM born 1941, 5' 8", 140#, brown/blue; diagnosis—MS; currently attempting to get better control of the following symptoms: walking difficulty, bladder and sexual dysfunction; personal interests: history, especially of Cleveland/Northern Ohio & Great Lakes areas, movies, trains, transit, historic preservation, naturism, gay male erotica. I am back in my home town after a career elsewhere, on extended medical leave prior to retirement. Always willing to hear from A-T subscribers in NE Ohio or visitors to our area. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #617,* or **E-mail: mlacleveoh@aol.com**

PENNSYLVANIA. Good guy, 40, 5'11", 165#, brown hair and eyes, good-looking, masculine, solid, nondisabled. Personable, casual, unconventional, active, affectionate. Enjoy music, the outdoors, movies, sports, exercise, good food, good conversation, good books, and good times. Have positive, sincere, lifelong interest in men with disablitlies, particularly upper extremity amputees and survivors of SCI, polio or spina bifida who use crutches. Maybe it's the athletic aspect of the upper body, my thoughts on intimacy and disability, discovering him whom others may overlook...Now I am embracing this interest and seeing where it leads me: I'm more than happy to explore and explain with the right guy. I hope to offer a high degree of awareness, knowledge and sensitivity to a disabled man to see what we can enjoy or build together. Have dated a few men with disabilities and all was ok. If you like what you hear and the above seems to fit, please be in touch. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1428 or ph: 215 829 9650.*

PHILLY SUBURBS. Lonely for the touch of a masculine man! Hi! My name is Dave, I am a 40 y.old GWM, 6", 170#, brown hair, blue eyes, who has muscular dystrophy and use a wheeelchair. I am a very emotional and sensitive man, who loves life. My interests are meeting new people, disabled or nondisabled, and getting together with friends. I also enjoy computers, movies, music, sports, and landscaping, travel, the beach, and worshipping the sun. I am open to all new friendships, am also seeking a monogamous relationship with a trustworthy GM, nondisabled preferred. I would like to meet someone who is also passionate and romantic, someone who likes to take things slow and who likes to get to know someone emotionally as well as physically. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1916.*

PENNSYLVANIA. GWM 39 years old with a swimmer's build, 5'9", 125 lbs, with cerebral palsy. I am masculine and cute. I have my college degree in theatre. I already wrote a play and it was staged at Penn State University in the main campus. Believe me—I don't let my disability stand in my way of anything or anybody. I live on my own, one hour away from Philadelphia and one hour away from New York City. My interests are the theatre, working out at the gym, dancing, going to the beach in the summer, laying in the sun to get a dark tan without a tan line, partying, going to see male dancers, and traveling. Believe me, I do everything and anything. I am looking for someone to be with to enjoy lifeand to have a blast with. And…Hey, is there any guy out there who wants to take a vacation? Please contact me if you do. I was thinking about going to one of the islands, just lay out on the beach in our bikinis and look at the view. *Bill Lasch, 1101 Seneca Street #208, Bethlehem, PA 18015, ph: 610 866 4679.*

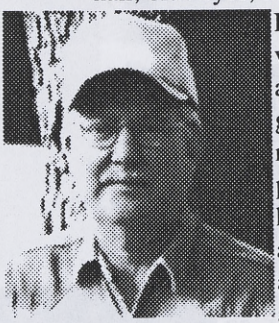


REFRESH MY MEMORY… Haven't I met your type before? You're a guy who's sweet without being syrupy. Character has more meaning to you than a word used to describe a Disney figure. Your emotional stability is as unshakable as earthquake-proof architecture. Grease is about as camp as you get. Laughter is a regular part of your day. And you're not only comfortable, but also flattering in jeans and a T-shirt. If we haven't met, maybe we should. Seeking a GM with a higher-functioning disability or who is able-bodied with the above qualities for a possible monogamous relationship. There's a handsome GWM, 28, 130#, and college educated on this end who has full upper-body range and strength despite tetraplegia. Interests include travel, personal enrichment (classes or reading), volunteerism, desktop publishing, the Internet, and exploring new pursuits. Philly area preferred. Please reply with photo, phone, *and correct postage to A-T #1918,* or **E-mail: Kingston@dellnet.com** Mention Able-Together in the subject line.

PENNSYLVANIA. Attractive, well-educated GWM 28, 5'8", 125, brown hair and eyes, neat and clean. I was born with spastic athetoid cerebral palsy which affects my speech, gait and fine motor control. I am ambulatory, but use a power wheelchair for distance. I enjoy computers, the Internet, AOL, travel, theater, Disability Issues and Rights, reading, meeting new people and sex. I am an active member of both ADAPT and the Philadelphia Rowing Program for the Disabled. Sexually, I am extremely open-minded, tend to prefer more of a submissive role, and have a strong interest in other men who have disabilities. Please feel free to write, call or email me. *Brian Peaceman, 150 N Bethlehem Pike #C-110, Ambler, PA 19002,* ph: 215 540 0411 before 10pm EST, or **email: BPeaceman@aol.com**

TEXAS. Hi, I'm Joey, 30, 5'5", medium build, 160 lbs., Hispanic. I was born with Spina Bifida. I use crutches to get around and I'm very active and do not let my disability slow me down. I enjoy tennis, basketball, hockey, traveling, museums, opera. I like active guys younger than me. I welcome correspondence from able or disabled guys. I like to just hang out or talk on the phone. My favorite books are novels by Anne Rice. My favorite foods are Mexican and Chinese. I enjoy walks in the park or weekends at the lake camping, gazing at the stars. I would like to hear from guys who have to wear diapers. Pen pals welcome. Please write with mailing address and preferably photo. Joey A. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1883.*

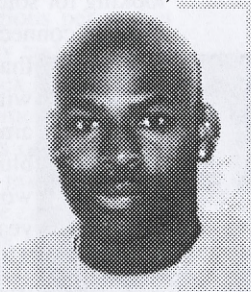
TEXAS BOY. Country kid seeks LTR with a down-to-earth abled country or city boy. GWM 61 (10/1/38), good natured, physically fit, college educated (Forester) and very masculine. 5'10", 170#, blond hair, blue eyes, hairy, fair complexion, HIV-neg., and no drugs ever.



I consider myself highly spirited, physically active, virile, very sensual/sexual and affectionate. My disability is very moderate and invisible. I have a congenital eye problem and wear glasses for good correction. Also have a low-back problem L-4/L-5 that prevents heavy lifting. Otherwise in excellent health and good shape. My friends say I'm unique and unconventional—yet always the gentleman. I am seeking a younger man, 30 to 45, possibly 50, attractive, slender/very trim, who is comfortable with self, respectful, very considerate, active, not consumed by material possessions, loyal honest and very sensual/sexual, HIV-neg. and drug-free, and seeking a sincere relationship based on love and trust with an older man. I am very willing to relocate for the right person. Your photo and 'phone # gets mine. *J. D., POB 221, Royse City, TX 75189,* or **E-mail: jodyjrd@hotmail.com**

TEXAS. Clean cut, GWM, 40s, 5'10", 165, able bodied, very interested in meeting new friends. I often find myself attracted to guys with physical disabilities. I travel a great deal (especially So. California and major cities), so location isn't as important as a sharing of mutual interests. I enjoy the performing and fine arts, classical music, architectural history, good food/wine with an interesting guy. My favorite countries to visit are France and Italy, but am open to new experiences. Let's have dinner (please be a non-smoker), explore our interests and perhaps plan an adventure! I look forward to hearing from you soon. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1420,* or **E-mail: Brooks346@aol.com**

TEXAS. GBM, 33, 6', 180, C7-incomplete quadriplegic. Shaved head, brown eyes, athletic build, college educated, wheelchair user, just an adventurous, energetic, clean-cut, all-American guy. Looking to meet friends who share similar interests. My interests are weightlifting, going to the movies, dining out, attending sporting events, theater, and traveling. I am extremely active in wheelchair sports, such as quad rugby, wheelchair racing and football. Neither age nor race are issues, if you're interested e-mail or write...*Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1885,* or **E-mail: neulsjr@swbell.net**



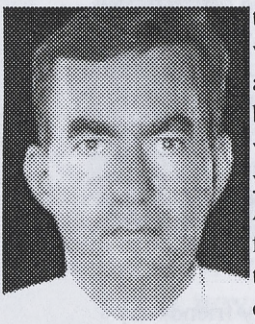
SOUTH TEXAS. Hi men; I'm a 48 y/o right aka. My friends say I'm nice looking, and a lot of fun to be around. I would love to meet a dominant, hairy, anglo/Latino Bear type for quality time and possibly a ltr. I am extremely honest, and have a very real desire to succeed in life. It would be so much nicer, if there was someone to share that life with. I'm 6'1", 220#, brn-buzzed-stache-GoT. I'm d&df, a smoker and social drinker. If you like what you read, please drop me a line. Thanks...TOM. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1932,* or **E-mail: beal@karnesec.net**

TEXAS. GWM 52, brown/hazel, 5'0", 131 lbs, HIV-neg., smoke, alcohol & drug free (12 yrs. recovery), seeking friendship, cuddling, safe sex, giggles, & perhaps love; but no wedding rings. I'm not into penpals or telephone friendships. From old polio I have scoliosis (spine curves to right), a hump on right side of back and an underdeveloped left shoulder—also slight, seasonal asthma. I'm handsome, mischievously sexual, and fit. I question authority—my own, as well as others'—and I'm playfully irreverent. I'm a community college professor, professionally secure and financially comfortable. I love music: R&R, big band & classical (baroque to 20th c), astrology (student for 20+ years), *X-Files, Cops, America's Most Wanted,*

antiques, bookstores, conversation, low fat dining, light exercise, Monopoly, Scrabble and old b&w movies. Please be: able to travel (as I am) should we decide to meet. Also be: DD and smoke free, sensitive, fun, fit within your ability, willing to try things you haven't, possibly a polio survivor and/or an amputee, or even physically normal. Photo gets mine. *Billy Roberts, ph: 512 385 8313,* or *replies with correct postage please to A-T #956.*

VIRGINIA, ALEXANDRIA. GWM 48, 5' 10" tall, 180#, brown hair and eyes, very hairy body, solid, nondisabled. Wishes to meet amputees for friendship and possibly more. *Michael Allen, POB 19435, Alexandria, VA 22320.*

HOMEBASE SEATTLE, WA. I know there is a great guy out there looking for someone he can spend quality time with! I'm truly interested in connecting with someone who is good to himself and those that he holds dear. I have been in long term relations with both a primary partner and long term friendships. I am a GWM 43, 175 lbs, 6'2", light brown hair, blue/green eyes and have muscular dystrophy. I have worked in the PC/networking fields for the last 20+ years and now plan to travel throughout North America, Australia and Europe. I am interested in meeting new friends worldwide. I now work as a Webmaster for a traveler resource called **AbleTraveler.com** just getting off the ground. I am also interested in writing a book that focuses on disabled men: coming out stories, insights, successful relationships, &c. My preference in a mate is someone with a good sense of humor. It doesn't matter to me if you have a disability, small stature, small cock, or if you work or don't work. It's more important ot me that you are happy with your life and what you contribute to the greater good. I use an electric wheelchair to get around. I love travel, theater, dining out or at home, or a concert. Give me a call, I would love to hear from you. *Dan Pierce, MSC 6756, POB 2428, Pensacola, FL 32513-2428, or ph: 206 619 1365 or* **e-mail: abletraveler@abac.com**



WASHINGTON. I am 45, Asian, 6'2", 270#, and diabetic. I am looking for a wonderful man, who is as sincere, kind, good hearted and honest as I am. He needs to enjoy communicating, sharing, and cuddling. I want someone who is seeking to grow personally and interpersonally, and is willing to support my growth too. Brains, integrity and character are far more important than looks to me. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1897,* or **E-mail: LUOGUOJIAN1@hotmail.com**

N. WISCONSIN. Down to earth, attractive, 44 year old GWM, 5'9"

tall, green eyes, 170 lb with muscular build. Short brown hair, salt & pepper beard. Live on small farm and am active. Have some arthritis problems (knees, hip and lower back) and a disc in lower back that

flares up at times. Grew up on farm, but have lived in several cities & have worked for the Forest Service, as well as in the medical field (surgical tech & home health). Would eventually like to find a life partner, but to start with pen pals, friends & buddies would be nice. I don't go to the bars (10 years clean and sober) and quit cigarettes 5 years ago, but I can deal with folks who have a social drink or occasional smoke. Am not a religious peron, but believe strongly in nature based spirituality. Honesty and real communication are very important to me. I enjoy good sex, but real intimacy to me goes much deeper than that. I am at home in the country, enjoy traveling when I can. Prefer small groups or one on one rather than big social displays. I have been HIV-positive for 11 years, with no serious problems related to that. I take care of myself & plan to be around for a long time yet. Anyone with an eye toward a long term relationship would have to be ok with that. Drop me a line. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1933.*

WISCONSIN. Gay White Male, 43 years of age. Interests are reading, movies, working out, talking and antiques. I have slight cerebral palsy. Looking for companionship/friendship. I will respond to all. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1149.*

Why not send A-T a photo to be published with your ad?

BEDFORDSHIRE, UK. GWM 46, 5'7", 189#, have cp, use wheelchair, sociable guy with greay hair, blue eyes, trim beard, 44 chest, 36 waist, interests include music, theatre, going out for a meal, a drink, a chat, enjoy travel when I can afford it (not working). Looking for new friends, maybe more. *Replies with correct international postage please to A-T #1888.*

Why not send A-T a photo to be published with your ad?

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA. Richard, 44 yo architect. I have Spinal Muscular Atrophy (Kugelberg and Welanders Syndrome) and would particularly like to correspond with other guys with this or similar neuro-muscular conditions—though anyone else is also welcome to write. I am still ambulant for most of the time, though becoming increasingly reliant on my wheelchair (manual, ultra light) for shopping and "long-haul" activities. My interests include theatre, opera, classical music (particularly choral—I sing!) and computers. I still socialize a bit on the gay scene here, though I often find access and standing around quite difficult. *Replies with correct international postage please to A-T #1665* or **E-mail: richpond@bigpond.com**

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA. Harold, a 49 y.o. Wheelchair user (SCI). 5'6" Well-built. Good-looking, affectionate and sexy. Professional background. I am very independent. Enjoy travelling, scuba diving, movies, dinners out. I drive. Would enjoy corresponding with guys who are disabled/nondisabled who share similar values with a view to friendship. Cheers & I hope to hear from you soon. *Replies with correct international postage please to A-T #1305,* or **email: harold@connexus.net.au**

Why not send A-T a photo to be published with your ad?

BRAZIL. Healthy life-enjoying white guy, 6', 180#, good shape, don't smoke, no drugs, live in Rio de Janeiro. When the sun is shining the city is almost irresistible, with its beaches, mountains, the rain forest. I go jogging daily on the shore and to swim practise four times a week. When at home I enjoy watching a good movie or a silly sitcom. I would really enjoy hearing from you. I travel to the US every year, but would also have a great time showing you around Rio. I am nondisabled but enjoy the company of disabled men, who I think are much more than men. Please be masculine (as I am) and born after 1960 preferably. *Replies with correct international postage please to A-T #1219,* or **E-mail: Debevic@uol.com.br**

BRASÍLIA. 29 yo English teacher, 5'4", well-built, short dark brn hair, glasses. Had polio, use crutches. Looking for masculine males 27-35. *Replies with correct international postage please to A-T #1948.*

HONDURAS. GWM 45, 160 lbs, 6', short brown hair, brown eyes, clean cut, clean shaven, hard of hearing, lips reading, English or Spanish language, I like travel, reading, art, cooking, homelife, look for permanent couple, friendship, someone to share the rest of my life with. *M.C., POB 1577, Tegucigalpa, Honduras, Central America.*

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Differently Abled

is a supportive social group for nonheterosexual men and women with and without disabilities.
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a newsletter for gay/lesbian stutterers.
For more info, write to:
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SAN FRANCISCO SUPPORTIVE PSYCHOTHERAPY GROUP

for gay/bisexual men with physical disabilities
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call David Indest on 415 626 7000 x 412 for details

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The **Center for Disability Rights** in **Rochester, New York** has begun monthly meetings of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered persons with disabilities. The Center is located at **41 Backus Street, Rochester, NY 14608**. The group will get together from **5:00 PM—8:00 PM every third Wednesday of the month**. Call **Bruce Darling** or **Susan Stahl** on **716 647-9257**

ABLE-TOGETHER *Magazine*

is in its **seventh year** of publication. A-T is mailed to subscribers across the globe in January, April, July, and October and is sold at gay/progressive bookstores.

Editor **Bret Throckmorton**, who has a degenerative spinal condition, examines the impact of disability on men's lives and relationships.

A-T Magazine *is* its subscribers—who contribute letters, poems, opinions, artwork, articles and bulletin-board items to the magazine, and help with outreach locally.

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is an email-based mailing-list discussion group... Post messages to the list and get feedback within 24 hours on the topics that interest YOU

Cafe A-T

meets ten times a year in a fully accessible Cafe in San Francisco's Castro district...out-of-town visitors especially welcome...BE SEEN HAVING A GOOD TIME WITH OTHER DISABLED/NONDISABLED MEN

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JUST LIKE YOU?
Someone with a disability
JUST LIKE YOURS?
A buddy just to hang out with.
Someone to reflect your reality,
to compare notes with,
share tribulations and successes,
show each other how it's done.
Whether yours is a recent
or not-so-recent injury or disability,
ABLE-TOGETHER
may well be able to show you
THERE'S SOMEONE LIKE YOU.

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